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The soldier and his  
masters

London

[1897?]

98-14397-24

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DATE FILMED: 4-8-98

INITIALS: FB

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## THE SOLDIER AND HIS MASTERS.

A FEW days before the end of last Session, a military member of the House of Commons, speaking at question time, asked for a fresh inquiry into the working of a certain system of sanitary control in military stations in India, which was suppressed by the House of Commons some years ago.

One might be tempted to drop a sarcasm by the way on the amount of inquiry this system seems to take, and on the willingness of its supporters to subject it to such reiterated investigation, considering the shock to public feeling involved in every such inquiry. But the subject is much too serious for petty recriminations, and involves far-reaching results, which it would be well that practical statesmen should recognise and ponder.

With one aspect of the question—the injury to women—I may say at once that I shall have nothing here to do. Much has been said upon it, and most justly said; the convinceable are convinced already, and the unconvinced have had Moses and the prophets and have not heard them; and it may for our present purpose be wholly left aside. But there is another side of the question on which curiously little has been said, and yet which might have been expected to be the first to catch the eye of the practical administrator. I mean the degradation of the soldier himself.

It is, perhaps, as extraordinary an instance as any on record of the way in which practical people will allow themselves to be immersed in details, or in the mere panic of present emergencies, and never stand far enough off to see the main bearing of the very questions that most immediately concern them. Looked at from such a generalising point of view, the facts are these. The nation engages the services of a large number of men, drawn haphazard by their own inclination from the rank and file of various social classes—raw material of human nature, taken mostly at its most ductile stage—and trains them for work which demands the very highest qualities,—devotion, fidelity, prompt obedience, a perfect discipline of mind and body, steadiness in emergency, cheerfulness in

privation, self-control under provocation, honesty, moderation and humanity amidst circumstances of the wildest temptation. They come to her, raw of the rawest, understanding just this, that orders have got to be obeyed, whatever they are, and that they themselves have to be drilled into shape whether they like it or not; and it is for her to decide what the orders shall be, and by what manner of treatment she will mould them for her use. They come, many of them, with habits of licence already acquired—habits they are not much ashamed of, but around which they are at least aware that there clings a certain cloud or film of formal discredit—habits that may be palliated or even defended, but can hardly be openly vaunted except in company one is sure of. Now, how is this new authority which they have accepted over them going to deal with the case? She is aware, and they are aware, that such habits are a fertile source of weakness, worthlessness and general demoralisation. Commended they cannot be; but she may discourage or she may indulge them. The young soldier is prepared for either course. Which does it stand to common-sense that she should choose? Which has she chosen? To which does she owe repeated difficulties, repeated failures, the despairs of the medical staff, and the gross utilities of her special enactments? To which is she going to owe a fresh departure in failure and humiliation, unless she takes at last the attitude she should have taken from the first, and sets herself to dig at the roots of the evil instead of lopping off its tops after seeding-time?

The truth is, that what is really wanted is not a fresh concession to the lower side of human nature, in the shape of a re-introduction of the old methods, but a re-inforcement of the higher, by a course of well-directed and persistent efforts to improve the character as well as the physique of the men. The old methods have been inquired into enough, and very badly they have come out of it, and what is wanted now is an inquiry into other and more respectable means of army betterment. Does it not stand to common-sense that the methods of the public schools—athletics, intelligent pursuits, constant and arduous occupation, generous emulation, responsibility for others, and, above all, the point of honour—are just as applicable to the army, of which lads of eighteen and twenty years form so large a part? What is this country thinking of, that when she has got these young men of all classes, down to the lowest and most ill-nurtured, into her own hands, under her very discipline, malleable to every touch of her fingers, responsive to every idea she may choose to set before them, she makes no attempt to seize the precious opportunity, to fill

up the defects of their early training, and make it a gain to them and not a curse that they have taken her for their *alma mater*? What has stupefied her that she cannot perceive that the game is in her own hands if only she chooses to play it? She sets the tune, and every muscle in the soldier's body quivers to march to it. Their ears are greedy of the name of honour, and it is for her to interpret what honour means, and as she interprets so they will understand. And what has she taught them? Has she ever plainly told them that these sinners of the hospital—whoever they are—are a disgrace to their colours and a weakness to the service? Has she made it the first ambition of every commanding officer to have a clean bill of health for the men under his command? She has at her back the great machinery of Sandhurst and of Woolwich—how is she using that machinery? Is it impressed on every young cadet that it will touch his honour to keep his men not only out of hospital, but out of the ways that lead to it, and that his personal influence and example must be brought to bear upon this point? If not, why not? The public schools are waking up to these questions; they are telling the boys that licentiousness is an indignity unworthy of a gentleman. Are the military colleges to be behind them? These gentlemen are being trained in public seminaries for the public service;—are their lessons in personal honour and discipline to fall below those of the civilian schools?

Is it not obvious that this is the line that ought to be taken? And it is not taken; and then honourable and gallant members come whimpering to Parliament and say that the army is out of health, and that something must be done for it—and advise, of all things, the thing that has most recently and publicly and conspicuously failed, and been dismissed by its most patient exploiters as utterly and hopelessly futile! Have we not had about enough of this sort of thing? Is it not the way to cover the army with contempt, in its own eyes and those of everybody else?

And the folly of it is equalled by the selfishness. We invite our soldiers to deserve well of their country; but what does she deserve of them? She cares for their food, their health, their discipline, because she realises that these are of practical use to her; they are the adjuncts of the article she pays for; but she does not see what use it is to her that they should be in themselves men honourable, chivalrous, pure; and therefore she takes no pains to make or keep them such. They are to serve her with all they have, to die for her, if need be, at a moment's notice; they are to be the agents—or, rather, the machinery—of her greatness; but for themselves, as men, she

is prodigal of her contempt; they can be what they please for her—"food for powder, man! food for powder."

Then, when she sees her army riddled with disease, she is filled, forsooth, with pity. Whose fault is it? Who lured them with promises of an immunity she could not secure? Who set an easy way of sin before them, and taught them to seek shameful safety for themselves by betraying women to a loathsome tyranny? Who, when she might have disciplined her sons to manly virtue, chose the lower way, and trained them to pampered and protected vice? It is a story of a nation's shame. The things that Parliament would fain forget are expunged from the journals of the House; would God the record of this infamy could be expunged for ever from before the eyes of posterity!

No doubt some people will tell us, as they have told us *ad nauseum*, that our alternative is an impossible alternative, and that we are expecting too much of human nature. We are not expecting at all too much of human nature. We are only expecting human nature to exert its inalienable prerogative of choice between its highest and its lowest possibilities. Human nature has more elements in it than some of these gentlemen seem to realise, and the higher elements claim some little recognition as well as the lower. To treat the lower as paramount—to concede to them all they can ask—is ruthlessly to sacrifice the higher. There is a law of demand and supply in character as in everything else; and the less demand you make on a man's higher faculties the less there will be of them to answer to the demand. This is just as true of self-control as it is of courage or energy or resource. Tommy Atkins will do what he is asked to do; but he is not likely, I am afraid, out of his own head, to grow a collection of costly virtues that his employers have no use for. Once show him that they are valued, and that he is valued for them, and he will begin to make some effort to produce them. It is not human nature that has failed us, so far, but the belief in human nature. The fault is less in Tommy Atkins than in his masters.

Does the thing really need so much arguing? It is not a theory; it is common matter of history and experience. What did the great commanders do? They insisted on a thing and got it. It was Wellington's boast that his soldiers, flushed with victory, never entered a shop in Paris but they paid for what they took; it was Cromwell's that his men never ruined a girl. Nobody can say that the Ironsides were milksops, or that Wellington's troops gave a poor account of themselves in the field. But why must we go back to Wellington and Cromwell? There is no lack of later demonstrations of the

responsiveness of men to a high demand. What was that sudden flare of energy that leaped from point to point all the way to Cape Coast Castle when a new finger touched the electric button at the Horse Guards, and each subordinate felt himself under an eye that knew what efficiency was, and meant to have it? What of the toils and hardships that Englishmen and Soudanese and soft Egyptians have been cheerfully sharing this last autumn in the Soudan? These things are the answer men give to leaders who believe in them, and they are not uncommon in the great emergencies of war. It seems a little strange that commanders who can ask and have all these virtues in time of war should ask and have no virtue at all in time of peace. After all, the soldier is a man under discipline; he has dedicated his strength to the service of his country, and it is not his own private affair whether he spends his time in hospital or out of it. He is a costly article at best, and those who pay for him have surely a right to expect that he shall not make himself, even in India, a useless object of his country's charity.

Let it be clearly understood that there is here no disposition to ignore the real and inherent difficulties of the case, no want of sympathy with the soldier cast adrift from home in an Indian climate. But we complain that those difficulties have been increased, not lessened, by the manner in which they have been met, and by the facilities afforded to the soldier for what he knows to be wrong, while little or no effort is made to diminish the stress of temptation by giving some chance to higher interests, and some stimulus to that power of sheer will to which, after all, the conquests of humanity over inward as well as outward obstacles have been mainly due.

Again, it is easy to mock at the slowness of these gradual and non-coercive moral measures. "We have got the foul fiend at our throats," they say, "and you propose to reduce his strength gradually by a course of low diet." Yes, but what if there is no other way? We cannot expect instantaneous results. There is thirty years' blundering to undo—to go no further back—before we can even begin at the beginning. But we may be very sure of this, that the longer we put off beginning at the beginning, the longer it will be before we reach the end. These gentlemen have been in such a hurry to get on that they have forgotten to notice in which direction they were going. They have put us back by thirty years at least. Now they want us to make a fresh start—still backwards. Are we going to do it?

The curious thing is, that this movement—this singular military manoeuvre—is being executed not simply, as some imagine, in the face of an irresponsible mob of moralists who

know nothing about the army, but in face of the reiterated and decisive opinion of the Army Sanitary Commission, the highest official authority on this very subject, pronouncing from year to year upon a full consideration of the whole evidence.

Here are a few extracts, out of many that might be given.

We begin with the "Report of the Royal Commission on the Sanitary State of the Army in India, 1859-63,"—two heavy blue-books, numbering some 2,000 pages:

"There is one means . . . which ought to be encouraged, and that is to improve the soldier's condition in the way of occupation, instruction and recreation—in fact, to occupy his wasted time beneficially and rationally. The late Gen. Jacob was fully aware of this when he stated that 'moral forces alone are of any value.' . . . So far as we can deal with this question, occupation appears to us to afford the most reasonable hope of diminishing this great scourge, by leading men away from the cantons and from vice."—Vol. I., p. 62.

"India has its licensed 'lal bazars' and its licensed spirit-selling. And both are encouraged to the utmost by leaving the men utterly without rational employment for their time." . . . Both "send men into the hospital in abundance, while instead of confronting both evils with the strong arm, and providing the men with useful occupations and manly amusements, Government sets up compulsory hospitals under its authority." "The authority of Government is avowed for both evils. So long as this is the case, they will extend and flourish."—*Ibid.*, vol. I., pp. 361-370. ("Observations by Miss Nightingale on Evidence in Statistical Returns.")

In the Report on Sanitary Measures in India, 1876-77, the Sanitary Commissioner for Bombay says:—

"In my opinion, the real measures to adopt lie in quite another direction. I am certain that the enforced idleness of the life the British soldier leads in India tends very materially to the prevalence of both drunkenness and incontinence, and that the only effectual remedy for diminishing the large annual loss of service to the State from each of these vices is to afford the men such healthy employment as will occupy their minds, and so lessen the temptation to commit them."—P. 97.

On this the Army Sanitary Commission remarks:—

"This was the view of the Royal Commission, stated fifteen years ago. The remedy has never been properly tried, and despite all other measures, drunkenness and vice are as rife as they were."—*Ibid.*, p. 142.

And again, on the general question:—

"Whatever police measures may be tried in attempting to diminish the present evil, it must not be overlooked that the evil itself is a moral one, and in this aspect is to be remedied only by the gradual moral elevation of the soldiers, and by the growth of self-control among them, aided by more rational diet, abstinence from strong drink, and facilities for occupation. . . . Those were substantially the remedies proposed by the Royal Commission on the Sanitary State of the Indian Army fifteen years ago, and the intervening experience has made no change in their apparent necessity."—P. 219.

\* All the italics are ours. One or two technical expressions have been omitted or softened.

Next year the same authority repeats the same view:—

"The idea of recurring to 'lal bazars,' which appears to have suggested itself as the last possible remedy for an evil which, as we have before pointed out, is a moral one, is out of the question on the ground of its immorality. Its tendency would be to increase the mischief."—"Report on Sanitary Measures in India," 1877-78, p. 196.

Seven years later—all these official recommendations having apparently been disregarded—things are no better. The Sanitary Commissioner for Madras says:—

"All our efforts to improve matters have been of no avail."—"Report on Sanitary Measures in India, 1884-85," p. 96.

And the Surgeon-General, again of Madras:—

"We are forced to admit—by a perusal of the figures—that these hospitals have hitherto been kept up for the propagation of disease amongst British soldiers, though originally established with a very different intention."—*Ibid.*, p. 80.

And the Army Sanitary Commission, speaking generally:—

"The whole subject appears to be surrounded with insurmountable difficulties, for in every Government the disease has advanced in the face of every means of prevention which has been adopted."—*Ibid.*, p. 153.

At the close of the year 1893, we have another memorandum by the Army Sanitary Commission,\* dealing with the latest facts, admitting the vast extent of the evil, and re-discussing the compulsory hospital system.

"When the rules were first promulgated, the Sanitary Department was sanguine that these diseases, which always occupied such a prominent place as a cause of sickness and invaliding among European soldiers in India, would be reduced to a mere fraction of what they had been, and even after years of unsuccessful result it was still hoped that with increased care and greater stringency the desired end might yet be attained. But there can be no question that the outcome was a failure."

"The facts, so far as we can ascertain them, lead us to the conclusion that a compulsory hospital system in India had proved a failure, and that its re-institution cannot consequently be advocated on sanitary grounds. In stating this conclusion we may add that we are merely repeating the opinions which the Army Sanitary Commission have uniformly held . . . and in support of this statement we may refer to the Memoranda on the Indian Sanitary Reports which have issued from this office for many years. We believe that the best practicable means of diminishing the prevalence of these diseases is to be found in establishing a system of voluntary hospitals, and in providing the soldier, as far as possible, with healthy occupation and recreation. . . .

"We would also strongly advocate that the power of commanding officers should be as much enlarged as practicable in the direction of diminishing the temptations to young soldiers, by preventing women, for

\* The Commission was at that time composed of the following members:—Lieut.-Gen. Sir Evelyn Wood, Col. H. Loosck R.E., Surg.-Gen. Sir Joseph Payrer, Surg.-Gen. J. M. Cunningham, C.S.I., M.D., Surg.-Lieut. Col. V. S. Pratt, Sir D. Galton, Surg.-Gen. J. A. Marston, C.B., M.D., Sir C. A. Cameron, M.D.

example, from coming about the lines after dusk, and also in putting places out of bounds where soldiers are believed to have contracted disease. Commanding officers should also be urged to encourage in every way all forms of athletic amusement. . . ."

This, then, is the subject, thus closely watched and studied year by year, thus repeatedly reconsidered on every fresh opportunity, and always with the same result, on which Major Rasch and his friends expect the Government to appoint a new Commission! We venture to say that a new Commission on this subject—directed to go over the old ground again—would be a mere waste of public time. But there is a point—or, rather, there are two distinct points—to which such an inquiry might very well be directed, and possibly with very useful results.

The first of these questions is, how far, if at all, any attempt has been made on the part of the authorities to carry out those recommendations of the Army Sanitary Commission, which refer to (1) the removal of direct sources of temptation, such as the presence of girls loitering about the lines after dusk,\* and (2) the occupying of the soldier's time in such a way as to improve his tone, morally and physically.

With regard to the latter of these recommendations many suggestions have been made by unofficial as well as official writers dating from as far back as 1859. In the *Quarterly Review* for that year there appeared an article—unsigned, of course, but coming, we believe, from the pen of Mr. Sidney Herbert (Lord Herbert of Lea), then Secretary for War—which, after dealing with various matters affecting the soldier's well-being, contains this remarkable passage:—

"The best-conducted troops are the Engineers, who work at their different trades. The active self-reliant Englishman is notoriously the most decadent soldier in Europe. He can neither cook, bake, make his clothes, nor hut himself, like the Frenchman, Sardinian, or even Turk. Contractors follow him everywhere, except into the presence of the enemy, and when he most needs every necessary of life, he finds himself a helpless man."

So, again, in 1871, the writer of an anonymous pamphlet, called "A Voice from the Ranks,"† complains of the want of interest in a soldier's life, and the absence of opportunity for self-improvement. He urges that there should be army workshops where the men could practise their trades, and make

\* The objection to restrictions placed on some girls, for the purpose of compelling them to submit to hospital treatment, obviously does not apply to the simple exclusion of all girls after certain hours, or of all who have no legitimate business about the place, for the purpose of removing sources of temptation. Such a mode of protection is due to the soldier, and involves no tyranny over the girls.

† *Quarterly Review*, No. 105 (Jan. and April, 1870).

‡ "A Voice from the Ranks." Mitchell. 1871.

their own shoes, bread, &c. He suggests that the officers should lecture on any military subject which they know thoroughly, and give the men a chance of learning, and adds that the men would like to know something of ambulance work, and how to carry the wounded, but there is no one to teach them.

Suggestions like these, repeated from time to time in various forms by writers in the *United Service Magazine* and elsewhere open up a wide field of inquiry. If they are practical suggestions, we should like to know how far they have ever found their way into fact. If they are impracticable, we should like to know how and why. Probably they only want working out into a consistent scheme, and some courage to carry them in the face of opposing interests. It needs, no doubt, a clear and daring mind like that of Sidney Herbert himself, thoroughly at home in army detail, but alive with kindness and common-sense, and strong enough to penetrate the webs of prejudice and of petty formalisms of all sorts. But are we going to say that there is no such mind to be found among those who sway the destinies of the British army? To the outsider it would seem that such a scheme would have a double value from an economic point of view, for, while it would save the taxpayer some part, at least, of the burden of maintaining 28,000 soldiers in a state of inefficiency for almost one month out of the twelve,\* it should at the same time effect a real economy in the matter of contracts for clothing and other necessities. Why should not the home army—and the India garrison, too, when not on active service—take up its own contracts, and the men have steady work and corresponding pay? The contractors would not like it, no doubt; but the contractor can be gradually eliminated without injustice to himself and with a too-long-delayed justice to the army and the nation. A more serious objection, sure to be raised, is that the men would not like it. Which men? The men who enter the army for the very purpose of loafing? Perhaps not. Perhaps the army would then attract better men. Some of the writers who advocate the establishment of army workshops insist that they should be purely voluntary. If so, they would probably not for a long time be self-supporting, and would die of inanition. The use of voluntary workshops would be not so much a means as a symptom of improvement. Even in the matter of occupation we must not expect Tommy Atkins to begin reforming himself of his own accord. But to say that the soldier will not come to like a life

\* This was the official computation for the year 1892. See "Memorandum of Army Sanitary Commission," December, 1893, already referred to.



of busy employment with better pay, brighter and more varied recreation, and a greatly increased sense of his own value and dignity better than his present life of vicious and weary idleness; is, to say the least of it, gratuitous. It is like saying that man will not like service in the Soudan. The answer is, that they do like it. The pleasure of purpose, effort, achievement, is greater than even the pleasure of having all one's time or one's hands and nothing whatever to do with it.

Of course, if the soldier has more work, he must also have more play. Out-door sports, gardens, gymnasia, reading-rooms, musical entertainments have all been recommended, and to these might, perhaps, be added the little museum where the soldier may deposit his natural history and other curiosities—leaving them duly ticketed for the benefit of those that shall come after him—and possibly get a lecture on them now and then from some lieutenant with similar tastes. But surely something has been done in these ways already? We want to know how much, and with what success. How many soldiers have gardens, and what do they do with them? What use do they make of the reading-room, and what papers do they read? Are there any successful soldiers' libraries, or is it left for Mr. Stead to plan an "Army Circulating Library" for India? These are the things we wish to hear about, not to be deluged with fresh evidence on the odious machinery and astonishing results of the compulsory hospital system.

Another question that might repay investigation is that of rewards and punishments. "There is no reward for temperance or thrift," complains a critic in the *United Service Magazine*.<sup>\*</sup> "If the inducement to keep the pledge were a stripe, it would do more good than could be anticipated by those who do not know the private soldier." Is it possible that the good-conduct stripe is given or withheld absolutely irrespective of a man's habits of drunkenness or sobriety? And how far do these habits affect promotion? And again, in the awarding of stripes and promotion, what account is taken of unbroken efficiency or of weeks of culpable absence from duty in hospital? These also are points on which we should be glad of information, both as to the present practice and as to any proposed or possible improvements.<sup>†</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> *United Service Magazine*, Nov., 1892.

<sup>†</sup> There are two questions not often brought forward, but probably always present to the minds of the advocates of the compulsory hospital and "lad bazar" system. We have no wish to drag these questions to the front; but we have an answer for each of them. The first is, that it is not by encouraging normal vices that you put an insuperable obstacle in the way of abnormal ones, but by discouraging vice in general as unsoldierly and dispicable. The second is, that we are not advocating such a penalising of disease as would tend to make the service unpopular and keep men out of it. We ask for nothing so unjust as that the authorities should suddenly turn upon the men whose vices they have

The other point to which we consider that the inquiry should be directed is one of certainly not less, and perhaps even greater, importance, since it is quite possible that it lies at the very root of the matter. Little attention has hitherto been drawn to it, obvious as it is; but a great deal will probably have to be concentrated upon it, either from within or from outside the army, before that "gradual moral elevation of the soldiers," of which the Army Sanitary Commission speaks as the sole hope of reducing disease, really takes place. I refer to the question of personal influence.

The difficulty of conducting an inquiry into so subtle a factor for good or evil is no doubt great. But there is no need to set about it in offensive or impracticable ways. Amongst the very great variety of characters and influences that must exist in the army, there are probably some men, if but a few, who have all along recognised the immense value of personal influence, and who, by a restrained and careful use of it, have so trained the sensitiveness of their men that the mere fear of incurring their displeasure or contempt has become a potent check on evil-doing. There are probably others again who, with an eye constantly fixed on the improvement and happiness of those under their command, have of their own initiative encouraged healthy and rational occupations and amusements, and have thus not only made themselves personally popular with the men, but done much to clear the ranks, so far as their influence has reached, of discontent, idleness, and vice. And there must be many more who, upon a word from the authorities, would cheerfully throw their energies into efforts of this kind, would make experiments and report on their success, and would do all in their power to make it felt that vicious habits are regarded with disapprobation as a dereliction of soldierly conduct and a curse to the army. There could surely be nothing offensive in asking for returns from commanding officers as to any efforts already made and their effect upon the troops, and also as to practical hindrances experienced in the attempt. The mere inquiry would draw the attention of officers to the subject, and prove that the authorities were interested in it. If necessary, some part of the questions and answers might be distinguished as "private and confidential," and one obvious difficulty might, perhaps, be got over by issuing the papers

pampered all along and begin to exact punishment for them. It is right and fair enough, from the nation's point of view, that insouciance for service from these causes should be treated as a branch of discipline. But effectual help to do right must precede increased severity against wrong—at least so far as such severity is positive and not merely negative, as in the loss of promotion or of good-conduct stripes.

direct from the inquiring authority to officers of all grades, and having them returned in the same way. The suggestions thus obtained might afterwards form the basis of further inquiry.

Besides the officers, there are two other classes of men whose influence with the soldier is of the greatest moment. These are the surgeon, whose business is to combat disease; and the chaplain, whose business is to combat sin. We know something of the way in which the doctors have set about their task; but how have the chaplains set about theirs? Have any organised attempts been made to meet the moral difficulties on its own ground, to bring home to the soldier his personal responsibility, to fire him with the idea of moral duty and put him in the way of self-respect and self-control? If there have been such attempts, how have they succeeded? Is there a difference in the tone and conduct of the men, recognised among themselves and perceptible to their officers and to all who have to deal with them? Is there a diminution of the numbers in hospital? Are there any results that can be gauged and tested? And if so, cannot the sphere of effort be widened, the example followed in other localities, and a general advance be made that shall tell at once on the character of the army and on hospital statistics from one end of India to the other?\*

\* Two associations at least, working on very different lines, have as a matter of fact been formed within the last few years with the object of diminishing vice, disease, or both. The older of these, the Army Health Association, was founded at Meerut in 1880 (about the time of the formal prohibition, though not the actual abatement, of the regulation system in India), and was strongly backed up by the medical and military staff. Its "Handbook" is, we believe, still widely distributed among the troops entering India. The book is open to criticism on several grounds, both as to manner and matter; it treats health as the object, morality rather as the means, and, indeed, contains ambiguous expressions which seem to point to some reliance being placed on the "protection" still afforded by the remains of the prohibited system. At the same time, it does urge upon the soldier habits of self-control and the avoidance of temptation, appealing to his sense of duty to the army and his comrades, and the disgrace of being left behind in hospital when others are called to the front, and to the antipathy of the home he may hereafter make for himself, and the dread of bringing misery on those who will then be dearest to him by his misconduct now. The book wants a thorough over-hauling, with better arrangement, free excisions, and a firmer and less ambiguous tone throughout to make it really and permanently useful.

The galut little society founded at Bareilly two or three years ago by the Rev. R. A. Cumine, under the name of the Order of St. John, takes very much higher ground, and works, naturally, under greater difficulties—and, we are sorry to say, with far less encouragement from those in authority. It is a sort of guild, with banners, knights, and an elaborate organisation, somewhat resembling that of the Good Templars. Its merits lie in its high religious tone, its unmistakable aim at morality for its own sake, and in the fact that it appears to be worked up by the men, and not simply for them. The fact of its exacting a pledge and publicity of membership which the other Association does not, together with its higher aim, is quite enough to account for the smallness of its numbers; but it has spread to eight or ten stations, and has we hope, a great career before it. Strange to say, it appears, so far, to have had but one single friend in a high position—the Bishop of Lucknow.

Possibly what is really most wanted at the present moment is not so much the spread of one particular organisation or another, as a number of simi-

It is very desirable that the inquiry should also bring out any marked successes of this kind achieved, apart from any organisation, by the individual influence of doctors or chaplains, persistently used in favour of morality. There doubtless are some such, possibly many. The investigation would, at any rate, throw light on one question which has a very direct relation to the matter in hand—the question how far the likelihood of their exercising this kind of influence is taken into account when appointments are being made to these posts. It is not enough that the army chaplain should be a gentleman and a man of the world, and should get on well with the officers. He has to represent God among men the most liable of all to forget Him; to uphold His standard, not to accept that of the mess-table; and to lead the forlorn hope against sin in its foulest forms as a true champion and comrade-in-God of man against the devil. The man that is wanted for this is the unflinching man of God, stern of conscience and pitiful of heart, a perpetual witness to the lonely soldier in an alien land of a spiritual Presence ever in the camp and acquainted with all his ways. So again with the surgeon. It does not lie outside but within a doctor's duty to place himself on the footing of a sympathetic adviser, and to use not only physical but moral means in the practice of his beneficent calling. That it should ever have been a matter of indifference to the authorities whether army surgeons exercised, or were capable of exercising, this kind of influence among the men, is another of those amazing lapses of common-sense which sometimes make one wonder if men in authority have "eaten of the insane root that takes the reason prisoner." Here again a new departure is needed, and one that shall take its rise not only in the army, but in the Medical School.

Indeed, there is no one of these suggestions with regard to personal ascendancy that does not take us back from the influences required of men to the schools where men are made. In Rudyard Kipling's "Brushwood Boy," the master drops a hint to the sixth-form boy. "When you have learnt how to handle boys, you will know how to handle men." The Brushwood Boy apparently thinks no more about it; but when he does have men to handle he handles them pretty much as if

taneous experiments on different lines, worked out with a minute and patient attention to results and adaptation to circumstances. But here, again, everything depends upon personal influence. Personal influence is the very life of an association such as these; the association itself is but its embodiment and machinery; and it should be the first aim of the authorities to see that the personal influences brought to bear upon the soldier shall be of an elevating and not a degrading character.

they and he were schoolboys still, and finds the methods of the Sixth—its rough-and-readiness, its personal considerateness and tact—work just as well on the weedy squad of loafers under an Indian sun as on the healthy young rowdies of the playground. It is surely not too much to hope that there are real Brushwood Boys in the army of India to-day, as manly, simple-minded, and successful as Rudyard Kipling's hero. Certainly this fitness for the command of men—a fitness which demands, and is based on, personal character—is one of the first desiderata in an officer, and the recognition of this fact by the authorities will naturally react on the schools that train for the army, and help to raise their standard to meet the demand.

Such an inquiry as this, with a clear aim at these two points—which affect the entire interests of the soldier as a rational being, and not simply his immediate efficiency for service—would be, we are convinced, of infinitely more value, even for the latter purpose, than another futile discussion of a system which has passed away amidst the disgust of the nation. Indeed, it is not impossible that the question of personal influences may prove to be that missing factor in the problem for which the sanitary and military authorities have so long been groping in vain. In the last considerable discussion on the subject in Parliament—a discussion raised on the Army Estimates in June, 1894—Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, then at the War Office, after acquiescing in the general conclusion that the Acts “had been of no practical effect whatever,” and that it was “idle to talk of re-imposing the system,” observed that “the figures fluctuated in the most unaccountable way, and there were the most extraordinary changes, especially in foreign stations.” To people who are not army experts, but mere observers of human nature, the idea naturally suggests itself that as personal influences *must* have some action, whether for good or evil, and as the “figures” take no account of such influences, the cause of the “unaccountable” fluctuation may possibly lie in this direction. Between the fixed stations in India, changing regiments come and go; officers leave on furlough, or promotion places them out of reach of the men they have directly influenced; and the temper and morals of the men fluctuate with the presence or absence of the Brushwood Boy. But whether this be actually the missing factor or not, it is hardly possible to over-estimate its importance. Men are largely led by affection and imagination, and it is wanton stupidity to leave these priceless qualities rotting in the mire for want of objects worthy of them and leaders capable of attracting and utilising them.

Instead, then, of Major Rasch's proposed inquiry into the working of the discarded system, we ask for an inquiry into the means of army betterment generally, with a special view to the improvement of the soldier's surroundings in time of peace, and to his moral elevation; and we believe that the report of such a Commission might become a true Soldier's Charter—a proof to the soldier that his masters have at last recognised in him the claims and needs of a rational human being.

So much for the purely military aspect of the question. But the military aspect of the question is by no means all. The legislator has to think of other interests besides those of the army, and there are problems of civil as well as military life that press heavily upon him. A corrupt soldiery means a corrupt people, and the evils with which the old regulation system professed to deal are not the only penalties of a vicious life. Police magistrates, Poor-law guardians, masters and matrons of workhouses, educational authorities, and all the philanthropies are confronted by a problem of imbecility which is just as surely due to vice in the sufferer or his parents. The soldier, when his years of service are over, passes back into civil life, bringing with him, for good or evil, the habits and ideas he has learnt in the army. We may go so far as to say that our army system will not have reached its perfection till this “return of the native” can be reckoned a positive gain to the morality of civil life. At present it is all the other way. Women of the lower classes wind up their bitter complaint with, “What can you expect? He has been in India.” Yet, if statesmen and army administrators would only open their eyes and see things as they are, they would see before them an opportunity of service to their country greater than any ever rendered in the field. The discipline and tone of the army might be made, and ought to be made, a means of perpetually replenishing all ranks of society with men inured to self-conquest and pledged to personal honour in every relation of life, and gentlemen in whose lives and on whose lips “conduct worthy of an officer and a gentleman” should come to have a meaning very much less cheap than it has to-day. Is it too much to ask of modern statesmanship that it should show some heed for the future of the race as well as the army, and should have strength enough to resist the panic of the doctors and lay with sober care the foundations of a system of army management worthy of Englishmen and of Christians?

Of course there are some people who do not prefer high ways to low ones, or clean ways to foul. These people are in

a great hurry to have the foul ways re-opened. "The state of things is too bad," they say; "it demands an instant remedy. We cannot wait for Sandhurst to turn out a batch of Brushwood Boys, or for a miraculous conversion of the army."

Legislate in a panic, then, gentlemen, if you must, and see what it comes to when you have time to reflect. Enact your remedy which is no remedy—which not the most police-ridden Government in Europe has ever made drastic enough for its adherents to cease fuming over its inefficacy. You will never see it efficacious here. You legislated in a panic thirty years ago, and you got a twenty-five years' agitation and a humiliating defeat at the end of it, but you never got efficiency. You may legislate again next spring, and there will be another twenty-five years' agitation ready for you, if you can hold out long enough to make it necessary. The forces which oppose such a system as yours are quite as persistent as the forces that demand it, and in the face of their opposition you will never perfect your machinery. You will only succeed in postponing the application of remedies which go to the root of the matter; and for every year that you postpone them they will become more difficult of application, more slow of operation, and the curse will be sinking deeper into the vitals of the race. The Acts are dead; but the evil they have done lives after them, and will for many a long year, in the lives they have defiled, the sensibilities they have tarnished, and in the cowardly desire to regain for vicious practices the shelter of selfish and disgraceful laws. But they are dead, and the statesman, be he who he may, who shall attempt, by however large a majority, to rebind that yoke of corruption upon British shoulders, will go down to posterity as one to whom was offered the alternative of raising or lowering the moral level of the English race, and who chose to lower it.\*

\* NOTE TO SECOND EDITION.—I have been charged with disparaging or ignoring the good work that is actually done in the army. It was very far from being my intention to do so. I have explicitly assumed in several passages (see every page from 10 to 14) that there were good influences at work, and good results produced by them, and asked for an inquiry which should bring out what was, as well as what was not, being done. The very question, while it implied a defect somewhere, invited testimony as to every effort to supply that defect.

Reprinted by the BRITISH COMMITTEE OF THE FEDERATION FOR THE  
ABOLITION OF THE STATE REGULATION OF VICE:—*Offices, 17, Tothill  
Street, Westminster, S.W. Price, 1d.; 6s. per 100.*

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